

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed March 1, 2004. Claims 8 – 13 were pending, and the Office Action rejected all claims. Specifically, informalities were noted in Claims 8, 9, 10, and 13. In addition, the Abstract and Title were objected to. Figure 11 was objected to, and Figure 12 was noted as missing. Claims 8 – 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Okawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,639,508). Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 in view of Okawa.

In response, the Applicant has amended the Abstract and Title. Additionally, Figure 11 has been amended with the label "Prior Art." It should be noted that the Applicant believes that Figure 12 was in fact submitted, and the Examiner is requested to view the drawing sheet labeled "4/11" which contains Figs. 4, 10 and 12. To be consistent with the designation of Figure 11, however, the Applicant has also amended Figure 12 with the label "Prior Art." The disclosure of drawing sheet "11/11" has been moved to the body of the specification, where it more appropriately belongs. The Applicant has also amended the claims to overcome the noted informalities, and provides the following comments with respect to the substantive rejections.

In the present invention, as claimed in the amended claims, the conductor layer 42 is placed on the upper side of the multi-layer plate 45 (referenced as 51 in the second embodiment), and the conductor layer 44 is placed on the lower (the opposite) side of the multi-layer plate 45. The polarization process is performed by placing a voltage between the conductor layer 42 and the conductor layer 44. With this method, undesired warping of the multi-layer plate can be avoided, as described in the specification on page 15, lines 12 – 23.

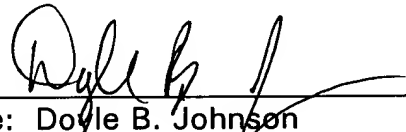
In contrast to the present invention, the polarization process discussed in Okawa is performed by placing a voltage between the electrode terminal portion 43 (the outer negative electrode 53) and the electrode terminal portions 45a, 45b

and 45c (the outer negative electrodes 54a, 54b, and 54c). In other words, the electrode terminal portion 43 is placed within the ceramic layers 40. This is very different from the present invention, wherein the polarization process is performed by placing a voltage between both ends of the multi-layer plate (i.e. the ceramic layers). Therefore, with the method disclosed in Okawa, there is a possibility that the ceramic layers may suffer from warping. Accordingly, the method of Okawa does not have the benefits taught and claimed by the present invention.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 8 – 13 are patentable in view of the prior art of record. Consequently, no further issues are believed to be outstanding, and it is respectfully submitted that this case is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action is respectfully requested.

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